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"ECOFEMINISM IN CANADIAN AND AMERICAN CONTEXT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECT WORKS OF MARGARET ATWOOD AND ALICE WALKER"

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1. Introduction :

Ecofeminism reflects an affinity between the domination of nature and subjugation of women in history, experience, religion, literature,ethics and epistemology. The word 'eco feminism' coined by the French feminist, Francoise d' Eaubonne in 1974, gained currency both with academicians and activists. Drawing attention to the current ecological crisis compounded by overpopulation, overconsumption and pollution alongside the age old patriarchal oppression of women, Eaubonne called on feminists to wed their cause to that of the environment and lead the way into a post-patriarchal, genuinely humanist and ecologically sustainable future. Ecofeminism is a multi-elemental cultural perspective about Nature and sub ordination of people especially women Referred to as the third wave of feminism, ecofeminism represents a blend of ecology, feminism and women's spirituality. Ecology also called bio ecology, bionomics or environmental ecology, it is a study of relationship between organisms and their environment. The word ecology was coined by the German Zoologist Ernst Haeckel (Hacker) who applied the term ecologic to the "reaction of the animal both to its organic environment". The word comes from the Greek Oikos, meaning "household" "home" or 'place' to live.

This study will deal with the theory of ecofeminism and its application in some selected works of Margaret Atwood and Alice walker especially in candian and American Context an effort will be made to make a brief study of the chief critical theories discussing ecofeminism of the century. This study will also elaborate the current status of ecofeminism and its importance in literacy studies.

2. Ecofeminism : A Brief Survey

The term ecofeminism is derived literally as well as ideologically from an integration of ecology and feminism. The term was first coined by the French writer Francoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 in her book Le Feminism Ou La mort in

which, she has addressed the women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet called the earth.

Ecofeminism considers that the patriarchal system is responsible for any kind of oppression inflicted on the earth. It leads to eradicate race discrimination based on class. It also resists hetro sexism, ageism and speciesm. It comes forward to protect the animals, nature and marginalized people on the earth. This theory called ecofeminism is based on deep ecology and environmental justice movement which motivate people to fight against all social in equalities. Ecofeminism has also suggested some proposals to save the environmental problems

This research work will consider eco feministic concerns of select novels of Margaret Atwood and Alice walker as follows especially in candian and American Context.

i) Margaret At wood:

'The Edible Woman' (1969) 'Surfacing' (1972) 'Bodily Harm' (1981) 'The Handmaids Tale' (1985) 'Oryx and Crake' (2003)

ii) Alice Walker:

'The Color Purple' (1982) 'Meridian' (1976) 'The Third Life of Grange cope land' (1970) 'Possessing the Secret of Joy'.(1992) 'The Temple of Familiar.' (1989).

3. About Authors:

i) Margaret Atwood

Born in Ottawa in 1939, she is the daughter of a forest entomologist and spent part of her early years in the bush of North Quebec. She moved at the age of seven to Toronto. She studied at the University of Toronto then took her degree at Radcliffe College, Massachusetts, in 1962.

She is Canada's most eminent novelist and poet also writes short stories, critical studies, screenplays and books for children, Her works have been translated

into over 30 languages. Her reviews and critical articles have appeared in various eminent magazines and she has also edited many books, including "The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English' (1983) and, with Robert weaver, 'The Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories' in English (1986). She has been a full-time writer since 1972 , then holding a variety of academic posts and writer residencies. She was President of the Writers Union of Canada during 1981-82.

Margaret Atwood published her fiction in the late 1960s, when Consciousness Raising was at its height. By the early 1970s, she had published her initial two novels and her critical manifesto, 'Survival'. For example, in 1972, when Atwood published Surfacing and survival, Sheila Rowbotham published Women Resistance and Revolution a landmark feminist text. Throughout her oeuvre, Atwood has tried to raise the public's awareness of women's position in the society. In all her novels, Atwood is concerned with women's victimization. The researcher Proposes to examine her novels in a cultural context which will explore' the victimization of woman which includes anything that affects women's survival, specifically victimization through physical, psychological and economic manipulation. Survival is also taken in the broadest sense that includes both physical and spiritual survival "as anything more than a minimally human being". In the novel 'Survival', Atwood presents four Basic Victim Positions, "Which includes denying victimization, acquiescing in victimization repudiating victimization and becoming a "Creative Non Victim. Recognition of victimization deals with Atwood's initial two positions, when a victim learns to fight victimization and perhaps, succeeds well enough to live as fully functioning" "Creative Non-Victim".

When Atwood first started writing fiction and poems, she saw herself as a victim of the time. She doubted that a female Canadian writer like herself would be

able to break into the American, male dominated world of fiction. One of the main themes that Atwood uses victims for in her works is Canadian identity. Atwood believes that Canadian identity is built around survival and its central character, the victim. In her poem 'Journey to the Interior' Atwood uses an extended metaphor to compare a trek in the Canadian wilderness to a journey of self-discovery. Atwood creates a sense of hopelessness for the reader in the lines "A compass is useless… and words here are as pointless as calling in a vacant wilderness". The use of sibilance, onomatopoeia and the repetition of the "ess" sounds in this stanza

Atwood's novels show that the society sustains victimization by holding power over women. The protagonists of Atwood's novels are not satisfied with their lives, and as they explore the reasons for their discontent they, come to realize that they are the victims of social, economic, and political discrimination. No protagonist is able to avoid being victimized and two of them actually die, but all of them, to a greater or lesser degree, fight against victimization Patriarchal social economic and political systems prevent them from holding power and especially from their own lives.

Ecofeministic persective in The Atwood's novels:

Existence of victimization is present in all Atwood's novels, and is the subject of close focus in 'The Edible Woman.' The initial step toward recognizing victimization is understanding the imbalance of power in patriarchal society. The recognition process in Atwood's novels begins systematically in positions in which they have little power over their own lives. The primary constraint are economic and social although political constraints are examined in ' Bodily Harm' and 'The Handmaid's Tale' which is Atwood's only novel set mostly outside of candor. The Protagonist in it himself find themselves unable to free himself from discomfiting situation in his lives. Often careers are severely limited because of their gender. They are prompted to surrender whatever independence they have in order to gain

some stability through marriage. Marriage provides the economic security that they customarily cannot ensure for themselves by their own efforts. They find themselves trapped in a cycle that compels them to surrender to male domination. Patriarchal social economic and political systems prevent them from holding power and especially from their own lives. This Research attempts to take an in-depth study of Atwood's novels from an eco-feministic perspective. Atwood forecasts the upcoming feminist wave and ecological movements in the novel *'Surfacing'* (1972) Atwood's themes are replete with victimization and survival of women in male-dominated society. In her novels, she expresses the idea that men and women are equal at every level of existence. Her protagonists' remodify the term 'Survival' and emerge as a new woman. In this context, this novel's protagonist brings out the bondage between Women and Nature. The protagonist of the novel is unnamed she is commercial artist she left her isolated rural background and family nine years earlier, returns back to it in finding her missing father. She is accompanied by three friends Anna, Joe and David. Her quest embanks on two levels-the search for her real self and the other is alienation from the real world. She explores her psychological journey by diving deep to the roots that leads her into the natural world Her quest for her father makes her to discover herself which flashbacks her dead marriage, the abortion, the break from her parents and the confused value of her childhood.

Similarly, Atwood's best known post-feminist text 'Bodily Harm' (1981) demonstrates that the legal, economic and social, and political conditions of women are still bleak. It addresses itself to the "violation of human rights". Though women have become conscious of their- rights, they are exploited and suppressed. They are deprived of their basic human rights like all the weak and powerless in the world. It would be a mistake to assume that everything has changed. The goal of the feminist movement has not been achieved. This novel draws attention to the

horrifying status of women in the Post feminist era. The novel is a different kind of therapy to gender Victimization. Howells in his Margaret Atwood says "... In Bodily Harm the female bodies are all passive distorted, dismembered or coerced. Whiteness to the sexual power politics of the Berger epigraph" (120) The novel presents poignantly the abuse, torture, mutilation and finally the destruction of female body in hospital beds and prison cells for purposes of male domination - sexually. Ironically, it is an inscription of the female body and by connecting hospital room and jail and cell dramatically she presents the injury to the female body that result from its confinement.

By her grandmother's traditional approach, her child hood is suppressed and spoiled. So she detests her servile existence. To lead a life of freedom, she leaves the place. She begins her adult life as a versatile writer in Toronto. She gets commissioned to write articles for Visor, male- oriented journal and Pandora, a female oriented journal. So it offers her enough scope to write about both men and women.

In 'The Handmaid's Tale' Atwood depicts the adverse effect of environmental degradation on the life of women. Gilead, the biblically-inflected nation Atwood imagines is a totalitarian country which features taming and ruling of females. The natural world is denatured by man in the Republic of Gilead and pollution of environment has resulted in sterility and deformity of the offspring. Females are forced into a submissive position and are used for procreation and to bear children for the childless commanders and to act as handmaids. These handmaids who are degraded to the level of mere reproductive beings are not even supposed to think or feel and have to ration their thoughts. "The handmaids are desexed, dehumanized and are forbidden choice and desire. They who are the complete property of state have no name, identity or emotion other than fear and are known after the Commanders with whom they have to perform the

impregnation ceremony. They are denied the right to possess or to have control over her body and are proclaimed as unwomen if they fail to produce a child with in the fixed time allotted to them. The female protagonist Offered is one among the many handmaids in Gilead. Caught up in a world of rules, strict regulation, oppression and extreme punishment, the novel's protagonist, Offered attempts to get through each and every suffering, each and every day by holding on to the belief that she will someday be reunited with her husband and daughter. Like other women she too is considered as a mere natural resource, as a mere reproductive being and is utilized to the maximum. Her life in Gilead is no better than a confinement in a jail. She refers to herself in plural, indicating that her individual identity has been subsumed by a collective identity.

There are frequent references to animals, plants, smells and other objects typically associated with nature in the novel. Flowers and plants suggest confining circumstances of sexuality and reproduction. The handmaids are told to think of themselves as seeds- seeds and fruits are associated with manipulated, not natural reproduction. Nature in Gilead is thus seen as a justification for male sexual dominance and female oppression. In the novel the natural creatures and phenomenon are seen as the incarnation of females and the product of civilization such as guns, cars and books are the incarnation of males. Both women and nature suffer under patriarchal domination and are treated as objects to be controlled, subdued, consumed, exploited and tamed. In order to know their secret, to control and tame them, men of Science struggled to subdue nature and women and thus women, as well as nature, came to be dominated, controlled and exploited. And women become scapegoats for those exploiting the environment. The master slave role which marks man’s relation with nature is replicated in man’s relation with woman.

‘Oryx and Crake’ (2003) in which, Atwood visits the future and depicts for the readers the frightening global devastation and human annihilation. Since its publication, this fiction has drawn the attention from the critics. Some of them define this novel as a science fiction because of the extremely advanced science and technology mentioned in this novel. The study will attempt to interpret Oryx and Crake from the ecofeminist perspective. Nowadays, human beings’culture increasingly places demands on ecosystem, which has already broken the ecological balance and caused terrible consequences. More and more species are dying out, all kinds of environmental problems appear, and humankind’s survival is threatened. Meanwhile, the human society is not very peaceful either. The sex discrimination, class exploitation, racism, colonialism and neocolonialism still exist.

The exploitation of nature and the domination of the disadvantaged group of human beings coexist and are closely connected. Ecofeminism just focuses on their connection and digs into the deep cultural root of the crises occurring both in the natural world and the human society With the development of our society, ecofeminism will turn out to be more significant and profound.

ii) Alice Walker:

Born to sharecropper parents, Alice Walker grew up to become a highly acclaimed novelist, essayist and poet. She is best known for her 1982 novel ‘The Color Purple’, which won the 1983 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and soon was adapted for the big screen by Steven Spielberg. Walker is also known for her work as an activist Alice Malsenior Walker was born on February 9, 1944, in Eatonton, Georgia. The youngest daughter of sharecroppers, she grew up poor, with her mother working as a maid to help support the family's eight children .at 8 years old, Walker was shot in the right eye with a BB pellet while playing with two of

her brothers. Whitish scar tissue formed in her damaged eye, and she became self-conscious of this visible mark after the incident, Walker largely withdrew from the world around her. "For a long time, I thought I was very ugly and disfigured," she told John O'Brien in an interview that was published in Alice Walker: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present (1993). "This made me shy and timid, and I often reacted to insults and slights that were not intended." She found solace in reading and writing poetry Living in the racially divided South, Walker showcased a bright mind at her segregated schools, from high school as class valedictorian.

Schools and early career with the help of a scholarship, Walker was able to attend Spelman College in Atlanta. She later switched to Sarah Lawrence College in New York. While at Sarah Lawrence, Walker visited Africa as part of a study-abroad program. She graduated in 1965—the same year that she published her first short story. After college, Walker worked as a social worker, teacher and lecturer. She became active in the Civil Rights Movement, fighting for equality for all African Americans walker's first collection of poetry, which was published in 1968. Walker showed her talents for storytelling in her debut work Third Life of Grange Copeland (1970).

Walker continued to explore writing in all the forms. In 1973, she published the poetry collection ‘Revolutionary Petunias’ and the short story collection ‘In Love and Trouble’, which included the highly acclaimed "Everyday Use." The following year, she delivered her first children's book, to Langston Hughes: American Poet. She also emerged as a prominent voice in the black feminist movement.

Ecofeministic perspective in The Alice Walker’s Novels :

'The Color Purple': Book and Movie

Walker's career as a writer took flight with the publication of her third novel, The Color Purple, in 1982. Set in the early 1900s, the novel explores the female

African American experience through the life and struggle of its narrator, Celie. She suffers terrible abuse at the hands of her father, and later, from her husband. The compelling work won Walker both the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction and the National Book Award for Fiction in 1983 In 1985, Walker's story made it to the big screen: Steven Spielberg directed The Color Purple, which starred Whoopi Goldberg as Celie, as well as Oprah Winfrey and Danny Glover. Like the novel, the movie was a critical success, receiving 11 Academy Award nominations. Walker explored her own feelings about the film in her 1996 work, The Same River Twice: Honoring the Difficult. In 2005, The Color Purple became a Broadway musical.Walker incorporated characters and their relations from The Color Purple into two of her other novels: The Temple of My Familiar (1989) and Possessing the Secret of Joy (1992), which earned great critical praise and caused some controversy for its exploration of the practice of female genital mutilation 'By the Light of My Father's Smile' and later Works in 1998, Walker published her first novel in six years, ' By the Light of My Father's Smile'. Next up was the short story collection 'The Way Forward Is with a Broken Heart' (2000). Proving time and time again to be a versatile writer, Walker followed with the novel ' Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart' (2004), the essay collection 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For: Light in a Time of Darkness' (2006) and the well-received picture book 'There Is a Flower at the Tip of My Nose Smelling Me '(2006).Walker also wrote about her experiences with the group Women for Women International in 2010's Overcoming Speechlessness: A Poet Encounters the Horror in Rwanda, Eastern Congo and Palestine/Israel. She published another poetry collection, 'Hard Times Require Furious Dancing', that same year after more than four decades as a writer; Walker shows no signs of slowing down. In 2012, she released 'The Chicken Chronicles'; in this latest memoir, she ruminates on caring for her flock of chickens. The following year, she published 'Cushion in

the Road': Meditation and Wandering As the Whole World Awakens to Being in Harm's Way and the poetry collection 'The World Will Follow Joy: Turning Madness into Flowers'.

According to Walker's website, her books have been translated into more than two dozen languages and sold more than 15 million copies.

Through her involvement in civil rights activism, Walker met the New York City-born Jewish lawyer Melvyn Leventhal. Following their marriage in 1967, they became the first legally married interracial couple to live in Mississippi. The two had one daughter, Rebecca, before divorcing in 1976 Walker later dated both men and women, including singer Tracy Chapman. She was also known for publicly feuding with her daughter, who described how she was neglected by her writer mom in her memoir Black, White, and Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self (2000).

Along with her Pulitzer and National Book Award, Walker has been honored with the O. Henry Award and the Mahmoud Darwish Literary Prize for Fiction. Additionally, she was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in 2006 and received the LennonOno Peace Award in 2010.

In 2007, Walker's personal papers were made available to the public at Emory University in Georgia. In 2013, she was the subject of the acclaimed documentary – 'Alice Walker: Beauty in Truth'.

The central concept in '***The Third Life of Grange Copeland'*** the idea that people can die and be symbolically reborn more than once during the course of their life. Another key element of the text is Walker's use of an omniscient third-person narrator, who can describe the hidden thoughts and motivations of the characters. This is essential as the novel deals with the different personas that many characters assume in order either to conform to, or absolutely contradict, the racist stereotypes forced upon them. It is through this omniscient narration that

Walker takes the reader into the multiple lives of her protagonist Grange Copeland, which represent different ways in which black men can respond to the physical and economic slavery imposed by racist power systems.

Grange's first two responses are characterized by a certain level of brutality and misogyny: Brownfield's response is even more brutal and murderous. It is not Walker's intention however to present even Brownfield as a monstrous, innately evil character, for the motivations of such a character would remain enigmatic. In fact, Walker stresses the effect that circumstances, such as poverty, racial oppression and the lack of a loving home, have on the development of Grange's and Brownfield's respective characters Nonetheless, Walker is careful to avoid putting all the blame on circumstances, choosing to balance character development between the influence exerted by the outside world and the inner weaknesses of the characters themselves. She manages this balance by avoiding direct authorial condemnation of even the worst aspects of Grange and Brownfield's characters, keeping the tone of the omniscient narration fairly neutral. In this way, Walker shows that men and women, who are not born evil, can become monsters under the weight of historical and racial forces. In order to avoid this fate, the characters must accept responsibility for their actions. Throughout the work, recurrent symbols are used to track the development of various characters. Walker charts the downfall of Brownfield and his destruction of Mem through descriptions of their bodies. Brownfield sets out to destroy all that attracted him to Mem in the first place, in order to turn her into someone who deserves him. The destruction is symbolized by the withering of her wonderful breasts, part of the rounded, vital figure that attracted Brownfield. These breasts were the symbol of the couple's earlier generative lovemaking which was a gentle, joyful act of sharing, rather than an act of taking. Later in her novel, Mem's breasts shrivel up, like the rest of

her body. As Brownfield's love dies and his lovemaking becomes violent, so Mem's body slowly loses its health and vitality. Similarly, Walker symbolizes the destructive nature of endless labor for the sharecropper, through the ways that Brownfield's body shrinks, aches, dries up and cracks. Thus Walker uses both symbolism and the lack of authorial condemnation to keep her study of character development balanced between innate individual qualities and historical forces.

Alice Walkers possessing the ‘Secret of Joy’ (1992) has been one of the most controversial novels. In this revolutionary novel, walker adopts a completely unfamiliar position towards the African heritage by condemning the tradition of Female genital mutilation and its agents. In it Tashi is a protagonist who is rash and hysteric but walker clarifies that the circumstance has created her in that way. Duras death is Tashi’s traumatic child hood experience in Africa. when she suffers watching her beloved sister Dura bleeding to death during the female genital mutilation.

Walker attempts to restore the balance and ensure peaceful co-existence between the human and natural world. The novel, The Temple of my Familiar reveals how matriarchal society in which the beings are respected and treated equally existed before patriarchal society.

Ecofeminism is a social and political movement which evolved from various feminist movements it is combination of Ecocriticism and feminism it Equates women and nature because both have been dominated and exploited by others. One of the prominent African American writers Alice walkers The Temple of My Familiar contains ecofeminist element. The main characters miss. Lissie, zede and Fanny pay much attention towards reliving women from patriarchal society. They are also concerned with eco-preservation it also deals with the difference between the understanding of nature and women by women and men. This story has multiple themes in it. It deals with racism, Sexism, violence, female oppression

and nature's importance. The novel contains three pairs of lovers including two couples who wants to reconcile their relationship. Suwelo and Fanny and Arveyda and Cariotta have contradictory opinions in their relationships. Mr. Hal and Miss Lissie are inseparable. The novel contains a large number of voices that narrate the interconnectedness the ancient and present situations of the people and atmosphere.

4. Review of Literature:

Margaret Atwood and Alice Walker are widely acclaimed novelists to emerge in the literary horizon of twentieth century. Though they hail from different geographical regions Canadian and Afro American – they are all interested in women and have focused on major female characters in their novels. Sensitive in depicting women, they portray them with such power, compassion and insight that their novels become the work of consummate artists. All of them believe that strength of will and independence triumph. They admire those who have the courage to battle against impossible odds and come out as empowered women Margaret Atwood's fiction draws attention not only to the ways in which stories may be told but also to the function of language itself : the slipperiness of words and double operation of language as symbolic representation and as agent for changing the moodes of perception. Her novels are characterized by their refusal to invoke any final authority as their open endings resist conclusiveness, offering instead hesitations, absence or silence while hovering on the verge of new possibilities. Atwood is a political writer in the widest sense, for she is interested in an analysis of the dialectics of power and is shifting structures of ideology. Margaret Atwood as a 'true novelist' is interested in the ecofeministic concerns and dynamic power of language and story.

Atwood's writings have been widely acclaimed - her male (characters) in particular are stereotypical, representing only negative and distinctive elements.

The constant re-use of her themes, images and narrative styles hastened to make her work predictable. Techniques such as direct address, dramatic monologue and the use of personal and historic events allow Atwood to achieve a unique personal style and voice. She has the ability to present the ordinary in extraordinary ways.

As well, her style is one of direct personal address or dramatic monologue which involves a deft use of colloquialism; even the most ordinary words “this” or “but” carry startling importance, because the theory of art as mirror or map is outlined in her work. ‘Survival’ is basic to her writing; one should just admire the beauty of the mirror, the colour and complexity of the map, without neglecting the social relevance of poem or novel, the connection between art and life.

The basic imagery so characteristic of her verse – water, mirrors, photographs etc. recurs throughout her prose narratives, and always her characteristic sharpness, even asperity of mind is filtered through a flexible but tangy prose style.

Through her reference to history, Atwood is opening up a space beyond calamity, providing new ways that might be found to refigure the narrative of Canadian identity. Canadians need to construct a new discourse of nationhood which represents cultural difference and interaction. ‘Survival’ is the key stone or may be ‘Surfacing’, but not ‘Wilderness’ as any essentialist definition of Canadian’s. By taking wilderness as the key motif, she addresses not only her Canadian readership but also her international readership. Her fictional method is what is recognized as a feminist review of a traditional genre highlighting the artifice of literary convention and the social myths they inscribe.

Atwood’s novels are situated at the interface between language and reality, it highlights nothing so much as the artifice of representation, where the real world is transformed and reinvented within the imaginative spaces of fiction. Atwood’s view of prospects of survival for the human race has grown bleaker even as her

position has changed from her early Canadian nationalist stance to her growing transnational engagement with issues of environmental pollution in the 1990's.

The very title of her novel is significant of the differences with its dimension of fantasy and metaphor .Atwood's Surfacing is clearly one of her finest novels, the novel that can be read as a 'quest within a quest'. Her writing is grounded in strong sense of her own cultural identity as white, English-speaking, Canadian and female. She challenges the questioning stereotypes of nationality and gender by exposing the cultural fiction and the artificial limits being imposed on the understanding of the novel.

'Survival' and 'Surfacing' are the products of 1970's cultural nationalism. In Survival she describes key patterns of plot, theme and imagery which are like the field-markings in bird-books: that will help to distinguish this species from all others, Canadian literature from the other literature with which it is often compared and confused.

Elizabeth R. Baer a critic in her discussions presents Surfacing as a feminist and a nature based, search for self. Atwood uses the theme of victimization and how to avoid it in Surfacing. Her works are acute responsiveness to the Canadian landscape. Atwood spent her formative years largely in the sparsely settled "bush" of Northern Ontario and Quebec, rather than in cities. Surfacing takes place on an island two miles long in the wilderness of Northern Quebec, on the last rim of marginal civilization. Atwood's sense of peace, that takes various moods, of the animal life retreating before the intruder, is beautifully conveyed. Atwood satirically exposes the psychoanalytical consciousness of human nature.

Surfacing begins and ends with forest or rather the wilderness which is significant in Atwood's vision of literary history, as it is the story of one woman's quest to find an appropriate language in which the changing perception of her own

identity as Canadians and female are discussed. Surfacing also ends with a emphasis on Survival and the regenerative powers of the wilderness.

Atwood's motifs had been meticulously developed through the images which are verbal or issued. Atwood is all things to all people. She is a nationalist, a feminist, a psychologist, a Canadian. She's a maker and breaker of myth, a gothic writer. She's all these things, but finally she's unaccountably other. Her writing has the discipline of a social purpose but it remains elusive, complex and passionate. The pervading theme of Atwood's novels are old material but freshly and deftly imaged. Atwood diagnoses the problem of self-division in Surfacing that resonates on a number of other levels (i.e) the illness is a metaphor of the human condition itself. In 'Surfacing' she proves her dependence upon the society.

Drowning or submersion is one of the most persisted images in Atwood's writing appearing not only as the central metaphor in 'Surfacing' but in numerous poems using the symmetry of drowning by water / air and death of the parent or the child in Surfacing. Atwood imaginatively condenses the implication of the contemporary schism between flesh and spirit, secular and sacred, conscious and unconscious.

The frequent reference to mutilation, amputation, anesthesia and the robot-like, mechanized or wooden reality of the narrator's own immediate past are seen in the consequences of her abortion. The resolution of Surfacing is aesthetically and emotionally satisfying, entailing as it does a genuine metamorphosis, a psychological transformation. The American in Surfacing is a metaphor of a modern man in his most unlovable state. For Canadian Surfacing is an anatomy of the deluge of values and artifacts "flowing in from outside" which render invisible the values and artifacts that actually exist. Her true gift lies in poetic expression because of her spare, controlled and direct style. She frequently uses dual themes and images. She brings out a natural way of life in order to shed the roles imposed

upon people by commercial culture. The critics observe that her constant use of personal and historic events allow Atwood to achieve a uniquely personal style and voice. She presents the ordinary in an extraordinary way by giving the readers a new option for evaluating those things that were taken for granted.

Atwood makes use of the first person narrative in Surfacing, a device that in Atwood's medium has the curious effect of damping intensity while it provides the illusions of creating it. She utilizes Canadian tradition in an apparently more conscious way than most other writers of her generation. She taps Canadian culture's most important concerns, and brings to traditional materials her own sensibility, her own ways of saying things: the famous cool, apparently detached tone, the canny disposition of loaded words in short, punchy lines without much heightening of rhythm. It is a style highly distinctive both in its limitations and in its strength.

'The Edible Woman' like Surfacing is an enlargement upon the themes of her poems. It is delightfully wickedly funny. It is feminist, certainly, but it provides a satirical account of the absurd ways of Canadian men and women. The Edible Woman is a largely successful comic novel, even if the mechanics are sometimes a little clumsy, the satirical accounts of consumerism is a little drawn out. It is skillfully written, shifting easily from first to third person and back again to convey the stages of Marian's mental travel (i.e) her journey into self-alienation and out again. As a fiction writer Atwood's tradition is tenuous. Her novels are best read in the context of twentieth-century fiction where her first person narration, ironic self-reflexive narratives and symbolic or even mythic structures, are common.

There are elements that place her within a broadly defined Canadian tradition: Atwood's emphasis on the past and the individuals need to be apart of a social context, as well as her treatment of victimization and struggle for survival are common features in her Canadian novels. Atwood loses her innocence in her

writings but becomes self-conscious and responsible. Her writing is not anarchic, even when it treats of madness and alienation. She was always concerned with the question of "what freedom for women really is".

The basic metaphor of descent and surfacing is a transformation of Atwood's inherited romantic image of death by drowning. But it is carefully controlled, artistically simulated descent, of therapeutic purpose and value within the psychoanalytic dimension of the novel. The narrator's inner self, retains its integrity, expects for a fleeting moment during the peak experience of hallucinatory oneness in nature where Atwood synthesizes a primitive state of mind. She uses the theme of wilderness, sign of distinctive national heritage which she refers in her works. Like the wilderness, the city exists in an emotional vacuum. Atwood, as an observer knows that she has no control over the northern landscape, she describes as no one else does and admires its proud refusal to submit except to death. There is a pervasive chill in her imagery of Death and Cold. Atwood's techniques for the dissection of the human personality – the detached point of view, the clinical precision of language, the scientific imagery– all are reminiscent of the scientific or medical expert… The narrator's point of view comes from the tension that arises. Atwood's novels expose the relation between consumerism and the feminine mystique where a young woman's resistance to consuming and being consumed hints at a wider condition of social malaise which the feminist movement was just beginning to address. She is always seen as a feminist icon, although a resistant and at times inconvenient one. Atwood brings out the characteristic doublings of vision, and the balance between the narrator's interior vision and sharp observation of the real world outside. In some of her works she has taken an historical view of the North American feminist movement charting some of the waves in which feminism has changed from women's liberation to the theorized and subtly politicized feminism of the late

1980's and 90's. Many critics have commented on Atwood's revision of traditional fictional genres as she draws attention to the cultural myths they embody and to the multiple inherited scripts through which our perceptions of ourselves and the world are structured. In Surfacing the social construction of reality is analyzed to be realized as called by Atwood "mythologizing". It is usually conscious or unconscious enforcement of the sexual "polarities inherent in the myths of romantic love, nuclear marriage, the machismo male and the feminine women".

Atwood's treatment of civilization opposite to that of wilderness is that she uses landscape as predominantly and consistently figurative. She portrays the city as nothing more than a variation on the wilderness theme**.** She is extremely versatile writer, in every novel she takes up the convention of a different narrative form – Gothic romance, fairy tale, spy thriller, science fiction or history – working within those conventions and reshaping them. Her writing insistently challenges the limits of traditional genres**.**

Alice Walker grounds her fiction in the experiences of the south and southern blacks. All her works depend upon what black life is, has been and can be in a specified landscape and it becomes emblematic of American life. Walker's paradigm communities are nearly always black, rural and southern; they become viable emblems of her creation of familial and social generations that underscore her concerns with familial identity, continuity and rupture and with social roles, order and change. For the blacks, the black liberation movement was the rediscovery of their African heritage which was strengthening and invigorating, though it brought many problems to the surface. In the British women's movement they had a stronger working-class and socialist feminist element than the Americans; though their movement was better organized and better resourced it was at times felt far feistier. Her themes are based on the experiences of the blacks. Their valuable experiences as ordinary human beings should not be misinterpreted.

Her heritage and history provide a vehicle for understanding the modern world in which her characters live. It is because, she being a poor black women, is able to view the world differently from others. In her work she discusses about sexual violence and physical abuse to portray the breaches in black generation; also she incorporates white character as perpetration of the crime against the blacks. Walker attributes the search for freedom to black literary tradition based upon slave narratives which foster the belief in escape from the body along with freedom for the soul.

Significance of Study:

The present study will

1. Intend to study Ecofeminism in Canadian and American context.
2. Focus on Margaret at wood and Alice walker's Eco feministic concerns in the field of fictional writing in English.
3. Help in understanding Ecofeminstic concerns in selected work of Atwood and Alice walker.
4. Help us understand their interpretation of ecofeminism.
5. Help us understand their presentation of ecology and nature.
6. Show how both the writers deal with social issues in their work.

5. Aims and Objectives of the research:

1. To explain the term 'ecology' 'feminism', 'Victimization' from the modern and literary points of views.
2. To understand the concepts of 'Nature', ecology and 'Self Identity' in the literary contribution of Canadian and American Literature.
3. To explore the new dimension for the writings of Ecofeminism writers.

4. To study the Eco feministic concerns pertaining to the contribution of novels of Margaret Atwood and Alice Walker in the development of Canadian and American Literature.
5. To discuss the universal problem faced by Canadian and American female authors in their literary career.

6. Hypothesis:

Margaret Atwood and Alice walker's select works show the Ecofeministic concerns especially in Canadian and American context. Their Work depict concerns about nature, ecology, feminism, subordination of women and the degradation of the environment .Their fictional raise new sight into ecological issues,also discuss patriarchal dominance as incarnation of Nature.

Scope and limitations of work:

The present research work will be helpful in knowing the various Eco feministic concerns. This research will assist the readers in understanding and studying ecofeminism in Canadian and American context with special reference to Margaret Atwood and Alice walker's Novels from ecofeministic Perspective. Student and lovers of literature will comprehend difficult and in insoluble concepts, Eco feminist analysis of selected work so that student of literature will study the Ecofeminist aspect and will analyze their works in a simple way.

Tentative Scheme of Chaptarisation:

Chapter I - Introduction

Chapter II - Feminism and Ecofeminism in Canadian and American context

Chapter III - Ecofeminism in Margaret Atwoods select novels

Chapter IV - Ecofeminism in Alice Walkers select novels

Chapter V - Conclusion

7. Research Methodology:

Critical analysis will be central agenda of the proposed research. It adopts descriptive and analytic method The present research doesn't call for any field work.

8. Data Collection:

The data required for present research will be collected in two ways.

Primary Data:

Primary data will be the novel's written by the Margaret Atwood namely, 'The Edible woman' (1969), 'Surfacing' (1972), 'Bodily Harm' (1981) 'The Handmaids Tale' (1985), Oryx and Crake(2003). Alice walker including- , 'The color purple' (1982), 'Meridian'(1976),'The third life of Grange cope land'(1970) 'Possessing the secret of joy' (1992), 'The Temple of Familiar'(1989).

Secondary Data:

Secondary data will be collected from relevant books, journals, articles, Interviews, Critical analysis, web material, News Papers, Different reports published on Margaret At wood and Alice walker.

Primary and secondary data will also be collected from personal visits/Participation to the state level, national level and International seminars and conferences.

9. Conclusion:

Margaret Atwood and alice walker's works show eco feministic concerns. Ecofeminism glorifies the harmony between Women and Nature. The ultimate aim is to subvert the ideology of patriarchal society in which men subjugate both women and nature. For Walker, an ecologically harmonious society can be built with restoration of belief in spirituality, harmony between men and women and nature and human beings Based upon a close reading of some selected works of Margaret Atwood and Alice Walker, the thesis will demonstrate how these writers explore and examine the exploitation of nature, the oppression of women, colonialism and racism as the disparate aspects of ecofeminism. While Atwood shows how the exploitation of women and nature has found ample room in the Canadian consciousness leading to the subjugation of women and ecological devastation, Walker offers some solutions to worldwide sexism, racism and colonialism by reposing a strong faith in earth-based goddess spirituality and the preservation of indigenous cultures. An ecofeministic reading of these texts may help us realize the urgency and importance of maintaining the balance between Nature and Man as ecological tsunamis are ruling the roost nowadays.

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